

**WADE SIKORSKI**

EXHIBIT 2  
DATE 3-6-09  
SB 387

**Members of the Committee:**

I live on a ranch in Fallon County, and Senator Bales represents me. I am here because I adamantly disagree with the presumptions implicit in SB 387. This bill, along with a whole series of other bills, seems to presume that economic development and environmental protection are opposites. The more you have of one, the less you have of the other. If we are going to have economic development, we are told, we must sacrifice the environment. The metaphor is one of a balance, of a tradeoff between desired goals.

This metaphor is false to available evidence, demanding sacrifices that are both unnecessary and economically dysfunctional. Economic development and environmental protection are not opposites. In fact, they go together.

Every human economy, be it capitalist, socialist, feudal, or even barter, is a wholly owned subsidiary of nature's economy. In nature's economies, as in human economies, complex exchanges are necessary for healthy functioning. Only instead of money, the transfers are of energy, nutrients, and chemical reactions between the plants and animals, and between them and the air, water, and land. We are totally dependent on these exchanges, so much so that it could be said that human economies are wholly owned subsidiaries of nature's economy. Nature is our parent company.

Sacrificing our air, water, and land for our economy just does not make economic sense. By limiting issues the public can raise during hearings and by intimidating participation with ill-defined, if not impossible, bond requirements, the primary effect of this bill would be to conceal how much we are sacrificing, what the real economic costs are. I am handing out a map of Montana of birth abnormalities across Montana by county. You will notice that the highest concentrations of birth abnormalities are all downwind of Colstrip, which is by far and away the largest industrial source of mercury emissions in Montana.

People living downwind of Colstrip are paying a very high price for cheap electricity, which, incidentally, mostly goes out of state. If the medical bills of people living in these counties were included in the price of their electricity, I really doubt that any would believe they were better off trading the health of their children for cheap electricity. Costs like these are real and must addressed during the permitting process. Preventing the public from participating through such things as time constraints and intimidating bond requirements, does not help the economy. It conceals the real costs. Please vote against this bill.

